

ORIGIN/ACTION

APA-10

AIRGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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ARMY	CIA	NAVY
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A-007

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TO : Department of State

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: January 12, 1969

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY--CHART OF INCIDENTS, DECEMBER 1968.

REF :

1. The number of incidents shown on the attached chart climbed from 25 in November (including a spate of eight bombings on the night of November 13) to 47 in December. All areas of the country experienced the increase.

2. A wave of daring, well organized, and generally successful robberies involving groups of armed men account for a large part of the increase. Various sources indicate that at least three of these incidents, all in Guatemala City, were the work of either FAR or FAR(PGT):

December 2	Bottling plant	\$ 8-10,000
9	Bus company	1,200
23	Bank	55-60,000
		\$64-71,200

These additional robberies share similar modus operandi and may be part of the same operation:

December 13	Municipal cashier	\$10,000
20	Textile co. cashier	4,000
17	Shoe factory (robbery thwarted, guard killed)	\$14,000

Other robberies involving 6-8 man bands occurred in other parts of the country:

Enclosure: as stated

FORM 4-62 DS-323

Drafted by:

POL:DeJare:cam:1/9/69

Clearances:

POL-1:JWilson

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY

DATE

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TS AUTH and Classification REASON(S)

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Guatemala A-007

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December 14	Brewery truck, Escuintla	\$1,000
20	Traveling salesman, Quezaltenango	1,500
29	Merchant, Escuintla	4,500
		<u>\$7,000</u>

3. A second important factor leading to the increase was a number of unexplained shootings. In some measure it may well be that heavy imbibing accompanying the holidays clouded judgment, released inhibitions and frayed tempers. For example, in the Christmas period alone police and rescue squads noted 36 deaths and 66 injuries. Among them were at least 22 incidents involving bullet wounds. Even so, during the month there were a number of murders with possible political implications. Most dramatic was the December 9th slaying of little-liked PR Deputy Gonzalo LOPEZ Cifuentes, who became the fifth Guatemalan Congressman to lose his life since July 1966 when his bullet-riddled body (ten .22 slugs) turned up at the bottom of a sand pit 11 kilometers from the city. Although there were reports that sometime ago Lopez had received right-wing threats and that his house in the South Coast had been the target for terrorist hand grenades, he was well known as a none-too-subtle womanizer and poor credit risk. Police made no arrests and many tended to attribute Lopez' demise to personal rather than political causes.

4. Four comisionados militares died or disappeared during the month: on the 12th two comisionados in El Rincon, Chiquimula, were kidnapped and the next day the mutilated body of one was found; on the 17th a comisionado in Tecún Umán, San Marcos, was dragged from his home and shot; and on Christmas morn, a comisionado teetering home from a long drinking session at Nueva Concepción, Escuintla, was ambushed and chopped to death by a group who shouted "stool pigeon" as they attacked.

5. The press reported that two unidentified bodies turned up during the month, and next of kin reported three disappearances (not necessarily of a political nature, of course).

6. The only threat to official Americans came in the form of a bomb scare at the USAID offices. In what may well have been a diversionary tactic to draw police forces away from pursuit of the London and Montreal bank robbers, a caller identifying himself as FAR told the USAID receptionist that a bomb had been placed in the building. USAID evacuated its offices, but no device was located.

7. At year end the several explosions did occur, however. They appeared to be part of a intended wave of bombings to bring in the New Year, but proved more damaging for subversives than for the population. On the 23rd an explosion destroyed a house in downtown Guatemala. At blast center police reportedly found a machinegun clip in a room rented days before by "Jose Gonzalez." Two men were seen leaving the building at a high rate of speed

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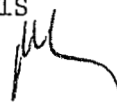
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just before the detonation, leading security forces to speculate that they had inadvertently triggered the device. On New Year's Eve a bomb destroyed a shed on the outskirts of the city, injuring no one. Another bomb at the electric plant at La Laguna exploded early in the morning of January 2 and damaged some of the high tension towers, but did not disrupt service. Other bombing attempts cost the FAR the loss of two longtime members. In Jalapa, Carlos Orlando LUCERO Lau, aka "El Seco," blew away both his hands when a bomb he was planting detonated prematurely. Lucero was one of the FAR trio staking out the scene.* Thus, he became the third person of the dozen known to be closely involved in the assassination to die.

8. An even larger fish fell into the hands of security forces at noontime on January 2. Although accounts of the incident vary in details, it appears that a military police patrol became suspicious of the activities of two youths. Calling for National Police reinforcement, they closed in as the pair was in the process of setting one of two bombs in their possession. One device exploded, injuring a policeman and a passer-by. Police caught one of the duo who proved to be Alfredo de Jesús MAYÉN Alfaro, aka "El Sapo." Mayén is a longtime, high ranking member of the FAR. Security forces made his identity known and have consigned him to the courts. Mayén is the first guerrilla of this level to be turned over to the judicial system in many months.

9. A Mission officer who travels widely in the Northeast of the country reports that violence was at a low ebb during the pre-Christmas season. He observed that known vigilantes in the Zacapa region had returned to their farms and curbed their "night-riding activities." He added that Colonel Echeverria, Zacapa Base Commander, travels freely around the city unarmed and unescorted. Whether this display of openness truly reflects a pacified Zacapa or the Colonel's bravado remains to be seen. The Colonel reportedly circularized all security forces in his Department ordering them to crack down on any comisionado militar who gets out of line, which would increase his chances for trouble from the right.

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*of Ambassador Mein's assassination.

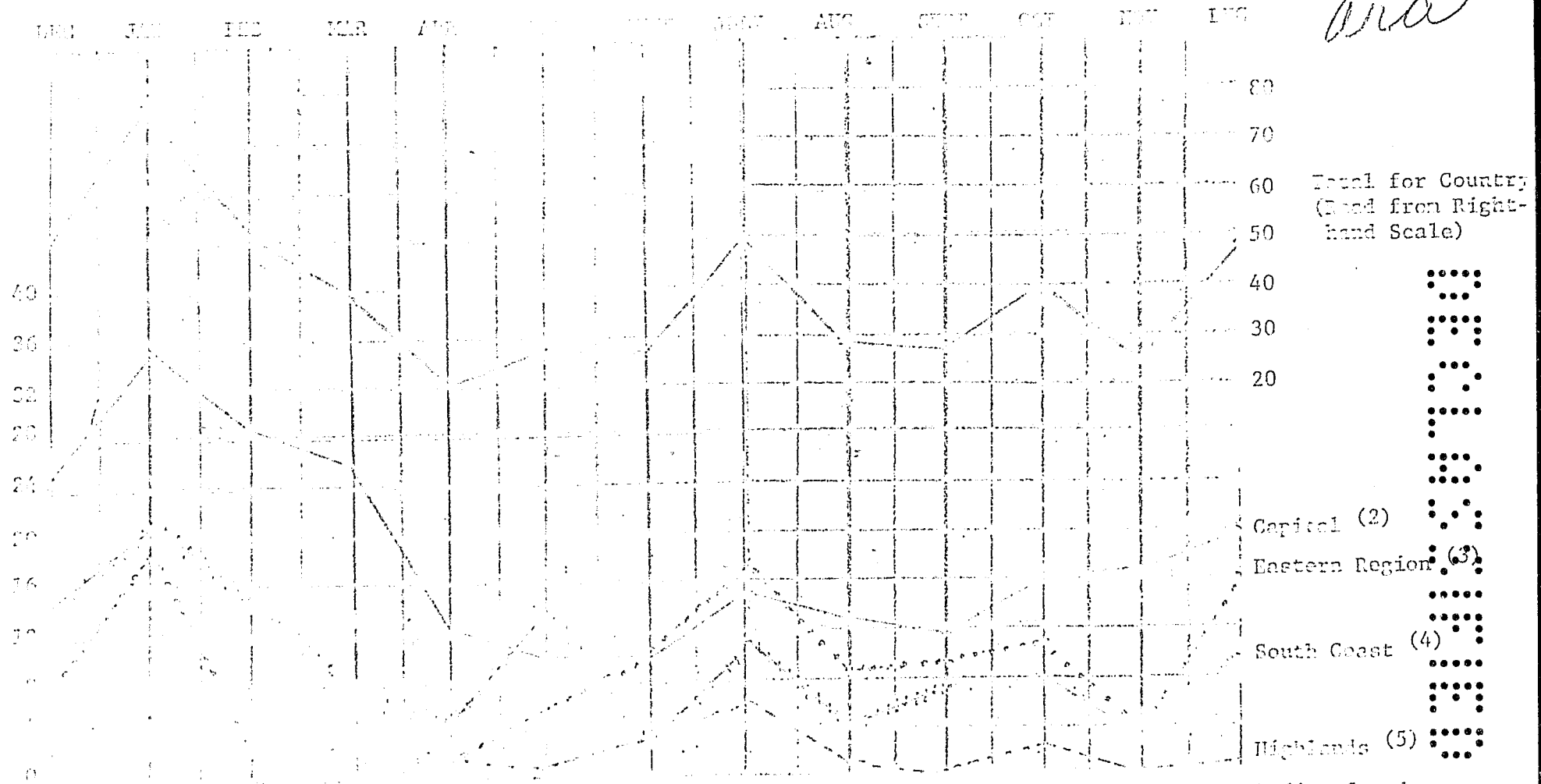
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MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF VIOLENCE IN GUATEMALA
 BY REGION, 1960-1969

(1)

A-007
 Guatemala:

Area



Each rate of violence, such as shootings, bombings, etc., and assassinated bodies found are

Capital: Guatemala City, La Aurora, Chiquirula, Izabal.
 Eastern Region: Patzún, Patzún, Suchitepéquez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa.
 South Coast: Amatenso, Amatenso, El Chichón, El Chichón, Alta Verapaz.
 Highlands: Huehuetenango, Huehuetenango, Huehuetenango, Huehuetenango.